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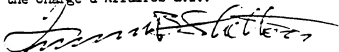
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Nations that it would under no circumstances invade Cuba. Otherwise, the Minister continued, the anti-Castro elements in Cuba itself would create a degree of instability unacceptable to their Russian masters. The Minister stated that approximately three months ago the Belgian Ambassador accredited to Cuba had reported from Havana that the Soviets had decided to make Cuba into a "showplace for Communism in the Western Hemisphere" and that they were "applying tremendous pressure on the Cubans to force them to cease their erratic behavior and to work to the end of achieving this Soviet objective." The Minister further said that the Belgian Ambassador in Havana had stated that there appeared to be a good chance that the Soviet Union could achieve the completion of a "showcase" in Cuba provided they had a sufficient period of internal Cuban stability.

The Minister then expressed the thought that Khrushchev had deliberately placed the missile bases in Cuba for the purpose of forcing the United States to a showdown with the idea in mind that the Soviet Union would then maneuver the situation around to obtaining United Nations-supervised guarantees from the United States that the latter would not invade Cuba in return for the removal of the missiles. In this sense, the Minister felt that the Soviet Union had achieved its objective because, if they could remove any hope in the minds of the Cuban people that they would be liberated by a United States invasion, they would be able to "clamp down" sufficient Soviet Communist control on the island to achieve the "showcase character" which they desire and proceed with the use of Cuba as a base for subversion. Minister Vanheerswyngheles felt that, while the Soviet Union had achieved this objective, at the same time the highly forceful action of the United States in saying in effect "this far and no farther" accompanied by highly impressive military operations, had greatly strengthened the Atlantic Alliance and had reassured the European allies of the United States that it was ready, willing, and able to move into difficult situations with power and decisive action. In this sense the Minister felt that the United States had achieved a very considerable advantage. In addition, the Minister felt that the United States had achieved the advantage of having the Soviet Union publicly forced to "back down" in the face of superior US military might. Concern was expressed, however, by the Minister that Soviet propaganda would dull this advantage by its constant reiteration of the idea that Khrushchev was a "man of peace," willing to go to almost any length to achieve a peaceful solution. The Minister felt that it was extremely important that the United States make every effort not to allow the Soviet Union to achieve this objective and he felt that the United States and its allies should make every effort in a subtle manner to stress the point that the Soviet Union had been "forced to back down in the face of superior power."

Comment: It is, of course, impossible to assess the validity of the theory outlined by the Belgian Minister but, since he is the dean of the Western diplomatic representatives to Budapest with considerable experience as a diplomat both in Canada and Europe, it is felt that his views are worth a degree of attention.

For the Chargé d'Affaires a.i.:



Turner B. Shelton
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